

Variance against base operational budgets							
Budget area	2024/25 Budget	Qtr3 2024/25 Forecast		2024/25 Outturn Position			Reason for variance
		Forecast outturn	Variance	Outturn	Variance	Movement	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
NNDR	1,588	1,843	255	1,896	308	53	National Non Domestic Rates bills for Multistorey car parks and Wallfields are significantly higher than budgeted due to the 2023 Business Rate Revaluation. The property team will engage agents to appeal the revaluation in an attempt to reduce the liability, however there is no guarantee of success.
Transformation, staff restructuring costs	-	160	160	160	160	-	Service restructuring under the Transformation programme has resulted in one-off costs of £160k.
Planning service – staffing costs & reduced planning income	2,238	2,549	311	2,353	115	(196)	<p>Planning is £115k overspent at year end. This is mainly due to planning application income and ongoing recruitment difficulties. Whilst the number of planning applications has been better than recent years, the pattern is not completely stable and is linked to market factors such as high construction costs. However, the set increase in planning applications fees from April 2025 has meant that there has been an increase in applications submitted in Q4 force which has helped reduce the pressure on income.</p> <p>In terms of recruitment, whilst the service has been successful since January 2023 in filling a number of planning vacancies, there remains a shortage of planners available at a principal level in development management to deal with the more complex planning applications. In order to mitigate this impact, the service has introduced a number of measures to support existing staff progress their careers and gain the necessary experience. However, this does mean that the use of agency planners is still required in the short term to assist with the more complex applications.</p>
BEAM	(548)	953	1,501	980	1,528	27	Overspend and under achievement of income against profiled budget. Main reasons include: delayed opening from May to August, NNDR estimate of £200k against budget of £30k, delayed IT infrastructure /lack of Wi-Fi has meant using an overnight security company.
Charringtons House	-	333	333	319	319	(14)	Charringtons House was closed to tenants on 31 March 2023, the council remains liable for costs in relation to business rates and utilities.
Buntingford Depot	268	476	208	410	142	(66)	A rent review has been undertaken in respect of Buntingford Depot which has resulted in additional costs of £118k.
Miscellaneous assets, rent	(329)	(414)	(85)	(403)	(74)	11	Rent reviews have been undertaken on council owned assets which has resulted in rental income overachieving the budget.
Legal & Democratic Services	513	445	(68)	442	(71)	(3)	Underspend against salary budget of £71k following restructure of Legal Services team.
Housing & Health, salaries	2,252	2,053	(199)	2,103	(149)	50	Underspend on salaries due to vacant posts.
Housing Benefits	(371)	(737)	(366)	(405)	(34)	332	Budgets overstated for Housing Benefit subsidy and payments resulting in an underspend.

Strategic Finance	733	672	(61)	722	(11)	50	Underspend against salary budgets as a result of vacant post, costs including staff apointment and agency to cover S151
Parking	(1,115)	(1,373)	(258)	(1,308)	(193)	65	Projected over achievement of income.
UK shared prosperity fund	-	(42)	(42)	(42)	(42)	-	4% admin fee to be retained by East Herts, not budgeted for.
Waste Service	3,817	3,443	(374)	3,174	(643)	(269)	Waste services are forecasting an underspend against budgets this relates to: · contract inflation being lower than budgeted, · higher than budgeted income received for sales of recyclable materials
Senior Management Restructure	(250)	(61)	189	(61)	189	-	
Ban on overtime payments	(200)	(36)	164	(36)	164	-	All overtime budgets have been removed and saving achieved for these lines. The £200k was an overestimate of the budgets to be removed.
Avoidable contacts	(24)	-	24	-	24	-	Savings to be realised following implementation of Corporate Support Hub
Wallfields – renting out part of building	(117)	-	117	-	117	-	Savings built in with assumption of rent received from part way through the year, due to ongoing negotiations this date hasn't been achievable therefore the saving won't be achieved in full in 2024/25
Xeroboxes	(20)	-	20	-	20	-	Removal of xeroboxes from Wallfields to be implemented following upgrade of wifi
Procurement Act 2023 changes	(50)	-	50	-	50	-	Discussions underway with Stevenage Borough Council
Intranet	(28)	(7)	21	(7)	21	-	Work on replacing the hosted intranet underway, full saving to be realised in 2025/26. 4 months worth of saving to be achieved in 2024/25
Advertising on Assets	(18)	-	18	-	18	-	An Invitation to Tender is going out on an ESPO framework on Friday 7th February 2025 with the intention to award a contact mid-March ready for implementation 1 April.
Launchpad	(15)	15	30	22	37	7	Forecast income is for 2024/25 is £160k. Expenditure forecast is £175k. This includes all running costs (salaries, utilities, rates', marketing) and rental income to the council (£73,500 p/a)
Not previously reported							
IT services	2,774	2,788	14	2,329	(445)	(459)	Underspend on shared IT services due to delay in recruitment to new roles.
Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue Account	238	238	-	145	(93)	(93)	Budget set too high - revised for 2025/26
Capital Salaries funding	(150)	(150)	-	(177)	(27)	(27)	Agency staff cost funded from Capital
Northgate End Residential/Comercial	-	-	-	64	64	64	No budget for Council tax, security, insurance.
Revenue items to be funded from reserves	-	-	-	125	125	125	£61k transformation costs, £33k uninsured losses & £30k healthy lifestyle promotions
Total	11,186	13,148	1,962	12,805	1,619	(343)	
Other minor balances	5,992	6,039	47	6,058	67	20	
Overall total	17,178	19,187	2,009	18,863	1,686	(323)	